

## Karys Whitehead – St. Columban School – Ursuline Academy

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Volunteering has always been a part of my life that I enjoy. Using my talents to benefit others is an amazing feeling, but sometimes difficult. Seeing the smiles on peoples' faces in the end is always worth the hard work in the end and gives me the motivation to continue with volunteering. Three ways I feel like I have helped others in my life are through our younger drama program, being a part of the track team, and volunteering my time at Cancer Free Kids.

The Drama Club at St. Columban is always something I loved to be a part of. When the school introduced Jr. Drama Club, I knew that this program would need a little more attention. The second year of Jr. Drama Club, I had the opportunity to Stage Manage the younger participants. I was helping all participants three times a week from September to November. I had the opportunity to teach the children projecting skills, acting, singing, and many more key details to a show. It was not always the younger ones I was assisting, though. When the directors were running low on energy, I was always willing to back them up. Seeing the show from behind the scenes was a totally different experience.

I was a part of the crew for the program the previous year, but it was nothing like running the show. Making sure everyone remembered their cues, knew their lines, and was always showing the right facial expression showed me a whole different point of view. Although there were long rehearsals somedays, giving my time to this program really helped the company and I am grateful for the experience.

Along with drama, track has been a huge part of my life. This coming spring will be my 8<sup>th</sup> and final year of running for SMAC track. SMAC stands for Strength, Motivation, and Courage. Every track practice or meet I try to bring these three elements to the team.

I bring strength by being a thrower. Having the physical strength to throw is only a portion of the sport. Having the strength to step back into the ring time and time again is mostly what makes up my ability.

Motivation is what I try to provide most for the team. Standing on the side line and cheering everyone on gives as much to the team as placing. By the motivation of team members, the girls have the confidence to go that much further.

Finally, courage has been probably one of the hardest to accomplish. In practices, many of my team members and I will think that we are incapable of running anymore. Having the courage to end the work out and accomplish what we started always ends in a great result. Being a part of this team has given me strength, motivation, and courage and

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has truly made a great leader out of me. I am prepared to be the 8<sup>th</sup> grade leader that the team looks up to this year.

I have volunteered at many different locations, but Cancer Free Kids is my favorite. I have volunteered at Cancer Free Kids twice for our Jr. High service days. When I went my first time, several other 7<sup>th</sup> graders made care packages for kids in the hospital battling cancer. In each bag, we got to put in Courage the Lion, a stuffed lion to give the kids a sense of comfort and courage to keep fighting. It was such a cool feeling knowing these stuffed animals would be going directly to a child fighting a battle.

Cancer Free Kids was such an amazing experience I opted to go back this year and volunteer again. I am so glad I made the decision to do this. This time through we folded shirts. Folding shirts might not seem as exciting as making care packages, but I kept reminding myself we were helping the foundation and taking the work load off of them a little bit. We also learned about all of the amazing fundraisers they do during the year. Participating in some of these fundraisers sometime would be a great opportunity for me. Going back to Cancer Free Kids to volunteer is a goal of mine and I would like to keep this goal, even after I go back.

I certainly would not be who I am without these wonderful opportunities. Helping others really helps me in a way. Like Aubrey Rose, I would like to spend every day smiling and giving others a sense of joy and comfort. I would like to spend my time working one on one with people. It would be an amazing opportunity for me to give others my talent; my treasure would go to those who need it more than I do. I want to live my life moving forward with all of my good traits, passing them onto others as I go.